

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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EO 11652:N/A
TAGS: PFOR, TH, US
SUBJ: TESTIMONY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND BEFORE FRASER
SUB-COMMITTEE JUNE 23

SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AP ARTICLE RECEIVED BY SUBSCRIBERS IN BANGKOK ON TESTIMONY BY STEWART MEACHAM AND DAVID MORELL ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THAILAND, BEFORE THE FRASER SUB-COMMITTEE ON JUNE 23 IN WASHINGTON. ARTICLES BASED ON AP DISPATCH WERE CARRIED IN THAI-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS DAO SIAM AND DAILY NEWS ON JUNE 25, BUT NOT RPT NOT IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS. OFFICIAL RTG INTEREST IN HEARINGS REMAINS HIGH. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT INDICATE IF AP REPORT APPEARING BELOW CONVEYS GENERAL FLAVOR OF MEACHAM AND MORELL TESTIMONY AND SUMMARIZE MOST SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AT SUBCOMITTEE HEARING. END SUMMARY.

2. AP SUBSCRIBERS IN BANGKOK HAVE RECEIVED FOLLOWING ARTICLE FROM BUREAU IN WASHINGTON, SUMMARIZING TESTIMONY OF STEWART MEACHAM AND DAVID MORELL ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THAILAND, BEFORE FRASER SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUNE 23:

3. QTE THAILAND IS ON THE BRINK OF CIVIL WAR AND THE UNITED STATES
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FACES A CRUCIAL DECISION WHETHER TO CONTINUE TO BACK THE RULING MILITARY JUNTA OR PRESS FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORMS THAT COULD KEEP IT FROM FALLING TO A COMMUNIST-LED INSURGENCY, AN EXPERT ON ASIAN POLITICS SAID THURSDAY.

4. QTE DAVID MORELL, A PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR WHO HAS STUDIED THAT POLITICS FOR A DECADE, TOLD A U.S. HOUSE OF

REPRESENTATIVES SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SHOULD MAKE CONTINUED U.S. AID TO THAILAND CONTINGENT ON THAT COUNTRY'S RESTORING DEMOCRACY.

5. QTE "THEY NEED US MORE THAN WE NEED THEM," MORRELL SAID.

6. QTE "CALLING THE LESSON OF VIETNAM'S COLLAPSE "PAINFULLY CLEAR," MORELL SAID THAT EVEN IF THAI LEADERS REFUSE TO EFFECT REFORMS, THE UNITED STATES SHOULD AVOID BEING DRAGGED ALONG.

7. QTE "TO ME IT SEEMS IMPERATIVE THAT THE UNITED STATES NOT BECOME ENTRAPPED YET AGAIN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ON THE WRONG SIDE OF A LOSING BATTLE, SACRIFICING OUR PRESTIGE AND OUR MATERIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IN A FUTILE QUEST FOR SHORT-TERM REPRESSIVE STABILITY AT THE EXPENSE OF INHERENT HUMAN RIGHTS AND ESSENTIAL SOCIAL CHANGE," HE SAID.

8. QTE STEWART MEACHAM, FORMER DIRECTOR OF ASIAN SEMINARS CONDUCTED BY THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, SUGGESTED A FIRST MOVE BY THE UNITED STATES COULD BE TO DEMAND INFORMATION ABOUT 110 PERSONS FACING TRIAL IN THAILAND ON A VARIETY OF CHARGES INCLUDING COMMUNIST ACTIVITY AND PLOTTING AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

9. QTE "IN ADDITION," HE SAID, THERE ARE HUNDREDS OR EVEN THOUSANDS OF PERSONS FACING VAGUE ACCUSATIONS OF "ENDANGERING SOCIETY." LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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10. QTE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHARGES "ARE OF GREAT CONCERN TO THE UNITED STATES AND TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS. THEY ARE OF GREAT CONCERN TO THAILAND, BUT NOT MANY THAIS ARE IN A POSITION TO ASK THEM," MEACHAM SAID.

11. QTE MORELL SAID THE TRIAL OF THE 110, 23 OF WHOM REPORTEDLY ARE IN PRISON, WAS TO HAVE BEGUN LAST WEEK BUT WAS PUT OFF WITHOUT EXPLANATION. THE POSTPONEMENT, HE TOLD CHAIRMAN DON FRASER, "MAY NOT BE WHOLLY UNRELATED TO THIS HEARING."

12. QTE THAILAND'S GOVERNMENTS LONG HAVE BEEN TROUBLED BY COMMUNIST-DOMINATED BUT LARGELY DISORGANIZED INSURGENTS OPERATING IN REMOTE BORDER AREAS.

13. QTE "HOWEVER," MORELL SAID, "THE REPRESSIVE POLICIES OF THE MILITARY JUNTA THAT SEIZED POWER IN A BLOODY COUP LAST OCTOBER 6, ENDING THREE YEARS OF DEMOCRACY, HAVE DRIVEN MANY INFLUENTIAL THAIS, INCLUDING WRITERS, STUDENT AND LABOR LEADERS AND FORMER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT INTO THE INSURGENCY.

14. QTE "THERE ARE NO RELIABLE STATISTICS ON HOW MANY YOUTHFUL

ACTIVISTS HAVE JOINED," MORELL SAID, "BUT NO ONE SHOULD DOUBT THAT THE MOVEMENT HAS RECEIVED AN UNPRECEDENTED INFUSION OF IMPRESSIVE NEW LEADERS.

15. QTE "...THE TRUE THAI POLITICAL DRAMA IS WELL UNDER WAY. THE COUNTRY IS ON THE BRINK OF - SOME WOULD SAY ALREADY IN THE INITIAL PHASE OF - A TRUE CIVIL WAR ON THE MAOIST MODEL.

16. QTE " REVOLUTIONARY INSURGENCY BASED IN THE JUNGLES AND VILLAGES IS COMPETING FOR THE MANTLE OF LONG LEADERSHIP AGAINST MILITARISM CENTERED IN BANGKOK."

17. QTE MORELL SAID ,"THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT BACKING THE JUNTA WITH MORE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID COULD HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE EFFECT OF ENCOURAGING RATHER THAN DISCOURAGING, ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY.

18. QTE "THESE REVOLUTIONS SHOULD TELL US SOMETHING, THAT THERE ARE DEMANDS FOR REFORM FROM WITHIN THE SOCIETY, NOT JUST OUTSIDE AGITATORS," HE SAID. END QTE.

19. ARTICLES BASED ON THE ABOVE AP DISPATCH, APPEARED IN THE THAI-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS DAO SIAM AND DAILY NEWS IN BANGKOK ON JUNE 25 BUT NOT RPT NOT IN THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS. RTG INTEREST IN THE HEARINGS REMAINS HIGH.
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